MASCAGNI IN TROUBLE? THAT IS NOTHING NEW

Career of the Composer of "Cavalleria Rusticana" Marked by Outbursts of the Artistic Temperament—His Difficulties at Home and His Quarrels With the Public—Lively Record of His American Tour

Mascagni at the Piano in his Pajama Suit.

IS Mascagni in trouble again, as the cable despatches from Europe would have people believe? No, he is still in trouble; he is always in trouble, or to be more accurate he is always making trouble.

The latest news about him is such that were it not for Mascagni's past performances one might suspect some insidious press agent of trying to catch public attention at the precise moment when the author of "Cavalleria" is about to give the world a new opera. The libretto of this new work will be from the pen of another Italian schoolboy who will never come of age, Gabriele d'Annunzio.

Mascagni is now 49, having been born at Leghorn on December 7, 1863. His father, who was a baker, had hopes of transmitting to Pietro the prosperous bread shop he had inherited from his father. Pietro, however, was lazy and had an unfortunate liking for playing practical jokes on his father's customers. When an old woman broke her last front tooth on a little statue of the Virgin Pietro had smuggled into a loaf while it was baking his father decided to resort to severe measures of repression.

Pietro subsequently limped out of the house and went tramping for a month. By the end of that time old Mascagni bitterly repented of his hasty though justified treatment of his mischievous son. When the police located the young runaway he was told that any of his wishes regarding a career would be assisted by his family and that never, never again would he be compelled to bend over the kneading trough or to stand in front of the baking oven.

"I want to be a lawyer," Pietro declared when he finally wrestled himself free from the smothering embrace of his overjoyed parents.

"A lawyer you shall be," the father declared.

Pietro was young yet and had a few things to learn before beginning to read law in earnest. He began to attend school at the local lyceum and for a few months at least peace reigned in the Mascagni family.

Then it happened that one of the neighbors purchased a piano. Pietro began to neglect his home study and to spend more and more time listening to the neighbor's playing. Very soon the law lost all fascination for him and he decided to become a pianist.

The results of one or two allusions he made at the dinner table about the charms of a musical career were enough to convince him that his father would once more resort to strenuous physical treatment should he reveal his secret plans. He then began to buy stacks of classical and legal text books which were absolutely necessary to the continuation of his studies. Papa Mascagni grumbled, but finally settled all bills.

One day, however, a polite gentleman came in and with profuse apologies announced that he would like to collect a little sum, now over due, for music lessons given to Master Mascagni.

"Music lessons? To my son?"

"Yes, signor. I have had the honor and pleasure of teaching music to your son for a year."

"Hasn't he paid you in all that time?"

"He did pay me until last May. Only I am a little short of cash just now and I took the liberty."

When Pietro came home a painful explanation took place. It came out that he had entered into contract with a book dealer by which the book dealer repurchased from him on rather advantageous terms the books Pietro needed for his alleged legal studies. Then things began to happen. Pietro, much the worse for wear, was gathered in by one of his uncles. After his battered features had recovered their normal expression he was sent to the Cherubini Institute, where the famous Saffredini became his teacher.

For a couple of years the uncle had no cause to regret his generosity toward his wayward nephew. The very first compositions of the young music student found recognition and were performed at local festivals. A symphony in C minor, a kyrie written on the occasion of Cherubini's festival, a cantata for voices and orchestra, and a few more compositions made a pretty good showing for a boy of 16.

When in 1880 he won a first prize for setting to music Schiller's "Ode to Joy," which was used by Beethoven for the chorus of his "Ninth Symphony," Count Florestano de Lardel volunteered to pay for the boy's musical education until he was 25.

Pietro Mascagni went then to study at the Milan Conservatory of Music. Life in the musical capital of Italy offered too many temptations to the spirited young fellow. Time and time again his protector had to rescue him from angry creditors and designing persons of the fair sex. His early triumphs had devoloped his ego far beyond the safety limit. He was first ejected from Ponchielli's, then from Saldini's class at the conservatory.

One day a pupil of the opera class to whom he had been paying marked attention secured a place with a travelling opera company. Mascagni floated a loan with the usurers, who had oftentimes been pacified by Count Florestano, and the Conservatory saw him no more. He was not exactly missed by his teachers.

After copying parts for the orchestra, rehearsing the chorus, coaching the principals and doing many other things—what wouldn't he have done to remain near his songbird—Mascagni was promoted to the dignity of conductor.

Up to that time the company had done good business. Mascagni, however, succeeded very soon in alienating the good will of the public. Italian music lovers care very little for realism on the operatic stage, but they care for beautiful tones; their artistic conscience is never disturbed by the fact that the slain hero has to arise, bow to the gallery and repeat the aria whose finale coincided with the fatal dagger thrust.

Mascagni set about single handed to reform that time honored national habit. It came to pass that one night while the company was performing in Naples the gallery gods asked some slain hero to get to his feet and do it all over again.

Mascagni shooed the singer away and played the next motive. Pandemonium broke loose. Mascagni stopped the orchestra and turned round to address the audience.

"We will give no encores," he said very firmly.

"You will, too!" a hundred voices shouted back.

Once more the orchestra began playing the music for the next scene. The sound of the instruments was instantly drowned by a Niagara of vociferations.

"Fools! Fools!" Mascagni howled. "Don't you see that this man is dead?"

"You'll soon be dead too!" some one answered.

Ripping and crashing was heard somewhere near the ceiling; a wooden seat sailed through the auditorium and damaged the scenery. Lest they should find the range with the second missile Mascagni dived through the orchestra door and left the company to its own devices.

Another company offered him a place as conductor; then another and then another and he wrecked them all cheerfully by his stubborn refusal to give the public what the public wanted.

In between times he ran away with a beautiful young woman whose family didn't care for such a picturesque son-in-law, got married and settled in Cerignola. He was 25. He promised to ramble no more, and with the help of his father-in-law established himself as a piano teacher.

He met with success at first, but his eccentricities wearied some of his pupils. The others he threw bodily out of his studio. His wife's family responded to several appeals for money, but finally decided to invest their cash in more profitable ways.

Mascagni, his wife and two little Mascagnis actually went without food for a few days. Finally the Mayor of Cerignola, who had faith in the erratic composer's future, proposed to the municipal council that Mascagni be elected conductor of the town orchestra. The first month's salary amounting to 100 lire, about $20, was paid in advance to the hungry family.

had returned to him touched by his wife's apologetic explanations.

Under the guidance of this level headed woman Mascagni managed to earn a livelihood in the little town of Cerignola; but the little town of Cerignola lacked very sadly the atmosphere to which Mascagni had accustomed himself in his bohemian youth.

He had in his portfolio the completed score of an opera, "Cavalleria Rusticana," and was frightening his family about once a day by threatening to pull up stakes and move to Rome or Milan, where his genius would be better appreciated.

In those days fortunately Signora Mascagni acted as cashier for the household and collected from the maestro's pupils all tuition fees. Mascagni never had enough cash on hand to run very far away and not one of Cerignola's citizens was trusting enough to supply him with carfare to a distant point.

One day Signora Mascagni read in a newspaper about a prize which the filled the bill but for the fact that the "Intermezzo" was not finished.

After much coaxing Mascagni consented to add the last touch to the uncompleted score. Then in a fit of artistic temper or temperament he seized the whole manuscript and threw it into the fire, which wasn't burning very brightly. His wife rescued it and mailed it to the publishers. It won the prize and flattering hurdy gurdys have ever since nauseated several continents with their mournful rendering of the "Intermezzo."

This time Signora Mascagni advanced to her husband the price of a circular ticket to the largest Italian cities. This meant prosperity, fame, independence; at least it might have meant independence to a man of regular habits.

Mascagni has always spent a little more than his operas have netted him in royalties, and he has spent probably as much time in court as if he had followed the profession which once appealed to his boyish imagination.

sault. Once an organ grinder, anxious to show his respect for the maestro, stationed himself under Mascagni's windows and started grinding away the everlasting "Intermezzeo." Whether from nervousness or from personal choice he played it "prestissimo." Mascagni descended upon him and after abusing him soundly took the handle of the organ and showed the astonished organ grinder how to interpret his work properly.

A few days after what sight should greet Mascagni's eyes but an organ to which a large sign was affixed: "Pupil of the illustrissimo Maestro Mascagni."

Mascagni broke his cane over the miscreant's head and might have damaged his own knuckles if the police hadn't stopped the fight.

Ten years ago he decided quite suddenly to tour the United States. He gathered a motley company of singers, some tenth rate scenery and a low priced orchestra on the assumption that anything would do in this country. He

cans to write a Manila Te Deum to glorify Dewey's victory. He never went beyond the first bar, and finally laid it aside never to take it up again. His enthusiasm had cooled entirely.

Soon after his return from America the King of Spain invited him to direct a musical festival in Madrid. Mascagni accepted. On his arrival in Madrid he went to four different hotels without being able to secure accommodations.

On the first day of the festival, when he bowed to the audience, he was received in silence. Applause followed every selection but those from his own works. Driving home from the auditorium he was jeered at by the populace. He demanded explanations. "The man who prostituted his pen by glorifying musically the downfall of Spain," he was told, "should not have the nerve to show himself in Madrid."

Volubly he explained that, first of all, he had never written the incriminating document, and secondly that he loved America about as much as any patriotic

Mascagni

The Mascagni Family

Mascagni and D'Annunzio (on the ground) Taking an Automobile Accident

didn't bother much with advance bookings or advertising and never gave a thought to the financial end of the game.

His new opera "Iris" was given at the Herald Square Theatre and failed to attract much attention. Then followed a lamentable tour, in the course of which the composer was sued several times for breach of contract.

One Sunday afternoon, with a little band of artists, he crossed the Connecticut border and passed through this city on his way to Pennsylvania. Four summons servers were lying in wait for him. Knowing well that all his costumes and scenery could be attached on Monday morning Mascagni, always full of bravado, gave a concert in Manhattan and the composer's friends persuaded Mayor Seth Low to send a good sized regiment of New York policemen as an escort to protect Mascagni and his company on their route from the theatre on Broadway to take the New Jersey ferry, where they left at midnight for Philadelphia.

When the composer sailed from New York it was said he had declared he would never return. He gave his opinion of America when he arrived in Paris, and it was in no complimentary words that he declared he would never come back.

For months after his departure the Rialto teemed with long haired Italians who solicited help on the plea that they had been brought over by Mascagni and then abandoned without resources. There must have been a thousand of those "would have been" victims prowling around the city.

Before starting on his journey to America Mascagni had been commissioned by some patriotic Italian Americ-

Spaniard would. It was of no avail. Only the direct intervention of the King, whose invited guest he was, saved him from more contumely.

The Spaniards' attitude cut the maestro so deeply that he went so far as to declare that he would rather have to deal with a Boston sheriff than with a Spanish grandee. Considering that he had been arrested twice in Boston, it was saying much.

A second Mascagni visit was proposed in 1910, when a new opera was promised on Lady Godiva's equestrian escapade. This work, "Ysobel," involved the composer in legal proceedings with Liebler & Co. Bessie Abott was engaged to sing the leading role. Miss Abott sailed for this country, and it was announced that Mascagni was about to sail, and that the opera would be produced at the New Theatre.

Italian singers, orchestra directors and musicians began to arrive with every steamer, explaining to those with a five dollar bill to spare that the maestro had engaged them. Oh, yes! The maestro was to arrive next week and then they would have plenty of money.

Mascagni, however, did not sail, and the cable brought reports that he had differed with Liebler & Co. over payments. Suit was brought by the composer in Milan, and in March, 1911, it was announced by cable that he had won his suit. The composer subsequently conducted a "two a day" revival of "Cavalleria" at the London Hippodrome.

He finally produced "Ysobel" in South America last year at Buenos Ayres. In the intervals of his travels he directed orchestras and lyric theatres in Italy and resumed his teaching and composing.

In 1909 he was appointed conductor at the Rome Opera House. He selected his singers and musicians from the greatest European opera houses, bought many new operas, ordered square miles of scenery and—threw up the job.

As he is the musical director of the Costanzi Theatre it may be that he really stopped there, not for any girl called Costanza, but for a cash advance. His past, however, does not make the elopement theory totally incredible. Signora Mascagni has forgiven him a good many times.

It may be also that the knife fight which preceded his hurried departure was caused by his determination to go and meet D'Annunzio in Paris. Signora Mascagni knows that the combination D'Annunzio and Mascagni never produced anything but trouble. The two incorrigible boys have many a time worried the police by their pranks.

Ten years ago when Mascagni returned from America he and D'Annunzio set about to become famous by applying what they considered typical American methods. One day it was agreed that D'Annunzio's death in an automobile accident should be telephoned to the press.

"Let me run over you," Mascagni suggested.

To prove to the public that a terrible motor accident had taken place the two "enfants terribles" had a photographer record the scene. It was the worst evidence imaginable against the two fakers.

On the whole it seems unnecessary to worry over Mascagni's disappearance. It is a good bet that D'Annunzio will also disappear within a few days and then that both troublemakers will be found somewhere in Italy.

DECEIVED CHICKENS MADE TO GROW FAST BY USING SIXTEEN HOUR DAY

An instance of the way in which an industry often beset with uncertainties and failures can by the use of electricity be brought within the range of easy and successful operation is seen in a Southern incubating plant.

Here the heat control and air circulation are effected by electrical means, the growth of the chickens being artificially forced by electric light. Over the egg trays, which are placed on racks twenty deep, motor driven blowers circulate air heated by natural gas burners, and five thousand eggs can be handled and hatched in a space 2 feet by 4 feet by 4 feet, or about one-tenth the room occupied under the old methods.

After the hatching has begun trays with high sides take the place of the incubating trays. The heated air, which is forced evenly to all parts of the tray racks, is kept humid by being passed over pans of water, and the temperature is maintained always at 100 degrees.

The degree to which the growth of the chickens is forced by exposure to tungsten lights is surprising. The scheme is to substitute sixteen hour artificial days—with eight hour light and eight hour dark periods—for the natural twenty-four hour cycle. This works in a very simple way.

The chick naturally eats during the light hours, digesting the food after dark In eight hours he can eat all the food he wants, and in another eight hours he has digested it all. So eight hours is saved out of every twenty-four. The chicks thus live three electric days in two ordinary sunshine days, and in four weeks the electrically bred chicken far outstrips both in weight and condition his brother bred in the old fashioned way.

An electric pump is being used to recover deposits of coal which have washed down some parts of the Susquehanna River. Every spring freshet loosens up fine coal from the river banks and culm piles, and it travels for miles along the bottoms of the river, eventually settling in sand bars, eddies, still water beds, back of bridges, piers, &c.

It is estimated that at one point in the river as much as 100,000 tons can be reclaimed. Here the prevailing size of the coal is No. 4 buckwheat. The fuel is clean and of excellent heating value.

A centrifugal pump, driven by a 100 horse-power sixty cycle motor, sucks up the coal from the river bed and forces it with the water through a long pipe to the shore. Here the coal is deposited, the water flowing back to the river. The pump can suck up fifty tons of coal an hour.

Among the many devices which have recently been suggested for reducing the danger to ships of collision with sand bars, rocks, icebergs, derelicts and other vessels is an electrical sea pilot. It consists of a bronze c'gar shaped boat about fifty feet long, driven by electric power through a cable and steered automatically.

It can be used through the entire voyage or only during periods of fog. It sends back to the ship a continuous record of ocean temperature and instantly telegraphs an alarm signal to the bridge of the ship if it comes into contact with any foreign body.

A movement in the direction of improved cooking has been going on in a Southern city and recently an expert was engaged to give a series of lectures on the subject. The demonstrations were given with gas ranges burning natural gas.

The convention was to wind up with an exhibition of paper bag cookery; but the evening before the last day the natural gas main was broken ninety miles away. The next morning the cooking expert was facing a sad audience of 1,500 housewives, with no means of satisfying their eagerness to learn of the latest development in the culinary art.

It happened that a sales agent for an electric central station had already placed an exhibit of electric cooking devices in a booth in the lecture hall for the inspection of the women attending the convention. Here was his chance, and promptly he offered for instant service an electric fireless cooking range. The offer was accepted and the last and most important lesson of the course was completed with the aid of electric heat.

It is stated that the interruption of the gas supply in the homes of the city was borne most patiently by those housewives who were already supplied with electric appliances of various kinds. One citizen on returning home found his wife cooking vegetables and meat and boiling coffee on an upturned electric flatiron, transferring each dish, as it was finished, to an electric heating pad, which kept it warm until ready to serve.

While electricity is being used daily more and more for agricultural work many farmers are slow to adopt it, doubting its economy. A Michigan farmer who made up his mind to have electricity first and find out about it afterward has satisfactorily blazed the way for his brethren.

Using current for grinding feed, cutting ensilage, husking corn, cutting wood and pumping water, he noted that his minimum bill for power was $4.75 a month. He set about getting his money's worth. Learning to read his meter he kept close account month by month of his power, his output and his costs.

When he could not use all his monthly allowance of current himself he would grind feed and cut ensilage for his neighbors; and so he earned enough by his motor to pay a large part of his lighting and power bills. For two years he did practically all of his power work at an average cost of $5.48 a month.

Among other things he tells of doing in a letter to a friend are: Grinding in an hour a ton of heavy grain, such as shelled corn, barley or wheat, and 1,200 pounds of oats, at a cost of 2½ cents a hundredweight; cutting six tons of ensilage in an hour at a cost of 15 cents; husking 400 bushels of corn in ten hours at a cost of $1.60; sawing forty cords of wood in ten hours at a cost of 5 cents a cord, and running a pump for 2 cents an hour.

Herd of Dwarf Elephants.

From Harper's Weekly.

An English official in Uganda claims to have seen a herd of dwarf elephants, the existence of which has often been affirmed by natives.

When recently seen the company consisted of from thirty to forty individual elephants meandering in solitary fashion over a plain. The observer was most astonished at the weak defences offered by their bodies. None of them had a tusk of more than ten kilogrammes in weight. A dead member of the flock was afterward found, the tusk of which weighed but eight kilogrammes.